Righard Hartmann Wachrentrup No. 123 Post Helpup i.Lippe

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To

General Robertson

Subject: Petition for mercy on behalf of Ruth Closius.

I, Richard Hartmann, born 23.4.1890, 50 per cent incapacitated in the 1914-18 war, refugee from the East, am the father of Ruth Closius who was recently sentenced to death at Hamburg and is at present an inmate of the women's prison at Hamburg-Fuhlsbuettel.

My daughter was born on 5.7.1920 as a seven-months baby and grew up in modest circumstances together with her two sisters in a Social Democrat family. She attended elementary school, which owing to her backwardness she did not finish successfully.

Neither myself nor my daughters were ever members of an organisation of the Nazi party, for I felt quite capable of bringing up my children myself.

As my daughter could not take up a job at once, not having the school leaving certificate owing to her many illnesses (cerebral spages), she went into domestic service to look after the children of some Jewish friends of ours by the name of Baase. She had to give up this job later as the government issued an order forbidding Germans to be employed by Jews. She then went with one of her sisters to work as a commercial employee with a textile store, until she was called up, towards the middle of 1944, for service in Wehrmacht communication, as she came under the catigory of childless women. We did not her from her for a long time and did not know where the women had been taken to. Finally a letter from her arrived and we learnt to our surprise that the helpless girl had been taken to a concentration camp where she was being trained against her wish to be a supervisor. At first she worked in an office and at the clothing store, and later she was forced to take up the job of supervisor for which she had been selected. This shows how very naive girls were treated. In her letters she always complained that she would like to leave because that sort of life was unbearable for her. Her request for a

transfer was turned down by the Camp Commander. She became melancholy,

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took tablets and wanted to put an end to her life. Her chief reason was that she was not allowed to leave that camp. She had at that time only just become of age. As a result of her applications, she was threatened with being shot. She was also forced to do inhuman things.

There came a time when her nerves broke down completely, and she was granted sick leave at home. She never let us ask what was going on in the camp, but replied that in consideration of her nervous condition we should not worry her with such questions at home. She only told us that she had saved from death the mother of a Polish woman, Haliena, in the camp. She was in the camp of Uckermark for only 6 weeks, for at the end of her sick leave she was transferred to another camp (Barth in Pomerania). She spent the mayor part of her service in the camp at Barth. From there she fled from the Russians in 1945, together with 2000 Allied prisoners. This proves again that she never intended to treat the prisoners brutally. For they have to thank her for not having been driven to their deaths. Another statement shows that she had been ordered to take the prisoners to the ship Kopa-Koma, which was scuttled in the Baltic and can still be found there today.

Neither I nor my family can understand why our daughter should should have received such a severe sentence. For according to these statements she cannot be held responsible for all those death sentences. She was not the one who issued the orders, but merely a misused subordinate, who was often forced to carry out her duties by means of alcoholic drinks.

Sir, may me plead for your understanding in this tribulation - she has a two years old child - and beg of you to grant our daughter a reprieve from this hard sentence.

My entire family joins me in begging you to give my application sympathetic consideration.

Thanking you in anticipation, we remain,

our daughter's mournful parents

(signed) Richard Hartmann Martha Hartmann

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